



# RUDDER ORDERS



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From the NAVELSG Commander

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## My Challenge to NAVELSG's Chief Petty Officers

Throughout my Navy career, I've observed that no single group has made a greater contribution to a command's success than the Chief Petty Officers. I want to share with you my perception of four broad areas of accountability held by this unique group and challenge our Chief's Mess to excel at each one of them.

Our Chiefs are **mentors to our junior enlisted personnel**. Because of their tenure and choice to remain in the Navy for as long as they have, it's their job to accurately communicate the traditions and standards of our organization to ensure they'll be maintained by the next generation. Because of their experience, it's their job to explain and ensure regulations are upheld for the efficient and effective management of our Group. Disciplinarian, work supervisor and functional area expert are all roles that fall into this category. Additionally, being an advocate for their Sailors to higher authority can't be overemphasized...no one knows their people as well the Chief. They provide the invaluable link between our junior Sailors and higher authority that ensures a greater comprehension of each by the other.

Our Chiefs are **advisors and educators to our junior officers**. They are a key part of our Navy's officer development. As a division officer on my first ship, there was no person who had a greater influence on me, and the decisions I made, than my S-2 Division Chief. I quickly learned to take his advice. He kept me out of trouble, showed me the ropes and warned me about potential pitfalls. I was never more proud during that initial sea tour than when he referred to me among his fellow CPOs as "my ensign". I relied on him and he never let me down. Both groups... our junior officers and Chief Petty Officers alike... would be well-served to spend the time necessary to nurture a mutually respectful and trusting, professional relationship.

Likewise, our most senior enlisted leadership... usually Master and Senior Chief Petty Officers...are invaluable **counselors to our organizational commanders** and deputy commanders. Most command-level personnel decisions are destined for failure without the well-considered input of these senior leaders. Our Navy entrusts our Senior Chiefs and Master Chiefs with running the command programs most important to our organizational success. They take the pulse of the command from the deck plates on a daily basis. They provide an unofficial communication path to the senior enlisted leadership in other commands that can significantly improve mission accomplishment and get the most out of scarce resources. Our senior officers may run the Navy, but it is the Chiefs who make it run.

Most important on my mind today, our Chiefs are accountable to each other to maintain the high level of professional excellence established by their predecessors. Being a Chief carries with it the qualities of technical expertise, wisdom from experience and behavioral integrity. The bar has been set high. The vast majority of our Chiefs meet and exceed that high standard every day. They understand our Navy Ethos and Core Values and constantly strive to uphold them. Recently however, a few have made some very poor behavioral choices... most notably for fraternization and alcohol-related incidents... and they have been held accountable. Those choices negatively impacted our organizational health and tarnished the reputation of both our command and our Chief's Mess. I know these incidents were exceptions, but we will only be able to overcome their impact over time by educating our Sailors, continually emphasizing our high standards and enforcing accountability... particularly amongst our peers.

Command Master Chief Sweet and I are of one mind on this. NAVELSG can only achieve its mission if our Chief Petty Officers are actively engaged as proactive mentors to our junior Sailors, educators to our junior officers, counselors to our senior officers, and accountable to the Navy and each other for professional and behavioral standards. I look forward to discussing this topic with you as I travel throughout the Group.



*On the strength of one link in the cable,  
Dependeth the might of the chain.*

*Who knows when thou may'st be tested?  
So live that thou bearest the strain!*

*The Laws of the Navy, by Adm. R. A. Hopwood, Royal Navy*